

Bill Fromhold

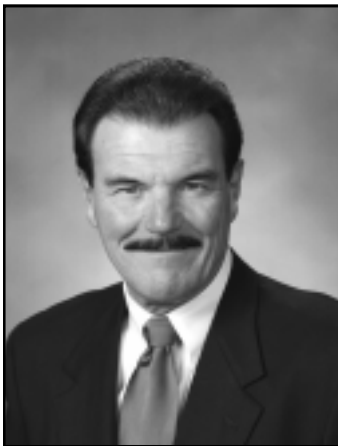
State Representative

49th District

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INTRODUCTION:

An update from
the Legislature

Leadership:
Assistant Democratic Whip

Committees:
Trade & Economic Development,
Vice Chair
Appropriations
Higher Education

Dear Fellow Citizen:

My name is Bill Fromhold and I'm honored to write today as one of your state legislators. It is my pleasure to join Representative Val Ogden and Senator Don Carlson on your 49th District legislative team.

As we get down to business this year in the state capital, I'm proud to reintroduce myself — and to emphasize that you should always feel free to stay in touch with me. Besides saying "Hello" and encouraging you to share your comments, I want to review several important legislative issues for our Vancouver region and our state as a whole:

■ *The budget.* Like any other subject, we must put partisan politics aside and write a budget that works — as much as humanly possible — for every citizen.

■ *Transportation.* My bottom line is that we'd better get our priorities straight — and create a transportation plan that keeps people and products moving safely and efficiently.

■ *Development.* Frankly, when it comes to economic development, we're all in this thing together. Southwest Washington has as much right as any other part of the state to share in responsible, high-quality job and business growth.

Please know that my assistant, Ann Tjersland, and I certainly look forward to hearing from you on these and other issues. Thank you so much again for the honor of representing our community in the Legislature!

Best wishes,

Bill Fromhold
State Representative
49th Legislative District

Budget:

A key word for our work
here had better be "bipartisan"

Never mind the petty rivalries. We have a job to do — and we can't let partisan politics get in the way of it.

The citizen-approved initiatives last fall — combined with extraordinary levels of inflation in health-care costs and rising energy costs — have taken quite a bite out of the general-fund budget. We need up-ward of \$1 billion to maintain state services at present levels. But nonetheless, Washington voters by wide margins said "Yes" to teacher raises and smaller school-class sizes. So it's our job as policymakers to write a budget that addresses needs of citizens in education, health care, human services, and other responsibilities.

It seems to me that we'd also better take a long, honest look at providing relief against prescription-drug prices — especially for senior citizens. Other budget-related items deserving serious attention include property-tax relief for senior citizens and first-time homebuyers, and decent wages for people who care for our kids, parents and disabled citizens.

Transportation:

The time is coming when
we won't be going anywhere

No other state in the nation relies as much on a robust international trade as our own state of Washington. Our ports in Vancouver and other cities get the goods to markets near and far — and provide quality paychecks for quality people.

But it doesn't make any sense to have world-class ports if agricultural and other products can't make it to them. And what if you have a busy career? What good is it if you don't have time to enjoy your family and home — because you're spending hours and hours out on the road crawling to and from work?

Representative Bill Fromhold

INTRODUCTION: An update from the Legislature

A Blue Ribbon Commission this past year looked at transportation challenges that confront each and every Washington county (all 39 of them). No one knows better than the citizens of our own Clark County the severity of these challenges.

Vancouver and the surrounding region is growing as fast as most any other part of the country. Now, I don't think I need to reiterate the benefits of our healthy economy. But at the same time, there's a "downside" to growth, too. We see it every day on the freeways and other roads.

We need to use the recommendations of the bipartisan, citizens' Blue Ribbon Commission to write a fair transportation plan — a plan that keeps people and their vehicles and products moving. And — yes, "fair" is a key word in that last sentence. How we as a state decide to pay for transportation improvements is among the most important matters waiting for attention in this year's legislative session. The outcome is one of the most important legacies we'll leave for future generations.



As Governor Locke and other citizens (Republicans as well as Democrats and Independents) have said on more than one occasion, our ship of state is big enough to hold all of our nearly six-million residents. Sure, we can and we should retain our unique characteristics from neighborhood-to-neighborhood and from city-to-city. But there's no excuse for letting any Washington block or region fall behind as the calendar moves us all into the 21st century.

Our whole state — east and west; rural, urban, and suburban — should see benefits in the work we do for economic development. High-tech industries, for instance, should be encouraged to invest in areas outside Puget Sound.

Furthermore:
Education and privacy are among the other issues calling for attention

It's so important to provide every youngster the tools he or she needs to succeed in the adult world. In addition to implementing the education initiatives that voters approved last fall, we've got to close the skills-gap between the things many schools teach and the things many businesses demand. I'd also like us to encourage more parental involvement in the classrooms of our community schools.

And another thing. It's unfortunate but all-too-true that most people reading this newsletter probably have firsthand experience with at least some level of privacy-loss. I hope you haven't had the much-worse experience of outright identity theft! In any case, the Legislature this year will examine proposals to crack down on the abuse of citizen privacy.

Development:
A team effort fundamental for our state's economic future

Vancouver, Washington, USA. Local pride — well-placed local pride! — is what that slogan's all about. But we can be very proud of our block, our neighborhood and our city without losing sight of the fact that this is "One Washington."

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